

GERSHAW, SENATOR F.W.

Ranching in Southern Alberta.
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Rutherford

in
**Southern
Alberta**

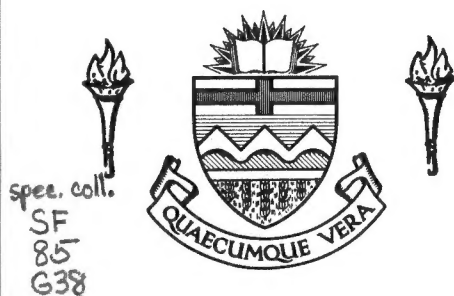


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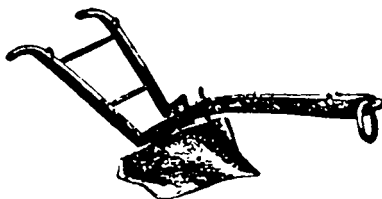
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Introduction . .

The articles in this small pamphlet are taken from the records of early ranching.

With changing times ranching methods have changed but the early ranchers in the short grass area established a great record. They were engaged in an industry that had much in the way of excitement and romance and they developed a way of life that should not be lost sight of.



The Buffalo

The American bison differs in many ways from the buffalo found in Europe, Asia and Africa. The name "buffalo," however, has usually been applied to these shaggy lords of the plains since the days when they roamed in countless thousands from Canada to Mexico. Early explorers saw the ground covered with them as far as the eye could reach. Steamboats on rivers were forced to stop because of great herds swimming across and early railway trains in the western States were held up for hours while buffalo trotted across the right-of-way.



The first white man to see buffalo in Western Canada was Henry Kellsey. He reports seeing, in 1692, thousands of these great dark brown animals roaming near the Red River in Manitoba.

When the N.W.M.P. made their amazing march westward from Manitoba in 1874, the Indians were living on buffalo. They would eat the choice parts such as the liver and the tongue of an animal they had killed and leave the rest for the wolves. They used the skins for clothing and wigwams. The Indians then had only bows and arrows and these weapons did not cause the buffalo to stampede as did the report of guns that were used later.

Bill Cody, 1845-1917, was one who destroyed many. He served in the Civil War and fought against the Indians in the U.S.A. When the Kansas Pacific Railway was being built, he contracted to supply the workmen with meat and, in 18 months, he killed 4,820 buffalo. He was called "Buffalo Bill" and organized the Great Wild West Show with which he toured Britain and other parts of Europe. It was said of him that he lived dangerously, fought bravely and played before kings and queens.

During the period of the greatest slaughter the Texas legislature proposed to adopt measures to save the herds from extinction. Opposition at once appeared by those who wanted to destroy the herds in order to subdue the Indians. General Sheridan stated that if the buffalo disappeared, the

prairies would be covered with cattle and the cowboy would succeed the hunter in the onward march of civilization. This proved to be true as great herds of cattle came as the buffalo moved off the range.

Antony Henday visited the area drained by the South Saskatchewan River in 1754 and was the first man to write of conditions there. He, in well-chosen words described the great herds of buffalo that he had seen.

By 1880, the buffalo of the plains were almost extinct. The Indians and traders killed some but thousands were mired in river beds, many perished by breaking through the ice in early winter, many were chased over cut-banks and left to their terrible fate, and others perished as blizzard succeeded blizzard and the snow became so deep that they could not get food. Modern weapons completed the destruction.

These lordly animals, although they failed to survive in their native state, yet they had the protective herd instinct. They moved in great bands to protect themselves against their enemies, especially the grey wolves.

The buffalo cow would go out to some nearby hollow when her young was being born. If a wolf appeared on the scene, she would give a call and the other buffalo would hurry to protect her.

Seton Thompson tells of seeing a toddling buffalo calf being guided back to the herd by its mother behind a screen of eight buffalo bulls facing the wolves with lowered horns. The calves would stay near the mother for as long as three years. It was a pathetic sight when a mother was shot, to see the calves show their devotion by staying with her until all were slain.

The older cows and not the bulls led the herd to a wooded area for the winter and led them out to the open prairie again in the spring.

A trader named McDonald wrote of seeing innumerable herds in 1793. A brother of a Governor of the Selkirk Colony described the scene from his canoe as he passed down the River Qu'Appelle. "Observing a good many dead buffalo in the river and mired along the banks, I spent the day counting them and was surprised to find that I had counted 7,300." The terrible odor from such places was almost beyond the endurance of white people.

Alexander Henday also reported that he counted about

20,000 bodies while going 35 miles along a river. Great herds would come to a stream. Those behind would crowd those in front into the water and quicksand and they would never get out. In their free state they have vanished but they have left all over the prairies deeply cut buffalo trails and well-defined paths, one above the other, on the sides of many hills, with their sharp hooves.

When they disappeared, the Indians on both sides of the line were often on the point of starvation. This created a great problem for the police of both countries.

The records show that at one time the only "plains" buffalo were a small herd in Montana. The owner offered them to the U.S.A. government but could not make a sale. Hon. Frank Oliver advised the Canadian government to buy the herd. Sir Wilfrid Laurier approved, saying in his eloquent way: "Insofar as it is in the power of man, the buffalo shall not perish from the earth."

The herd was purchased, taken to Wainwright Park in Alberta and it rapidly increased in numbers.

In 1925, when the pasture at Wainwright was becoming exhausted, some of the young buffalo were taken to Elk Island Park, near Edmonton, and to Banff. The greater number was moved to Wood Buffalo Park in the Far North near Fort Smith. They were taken by train to Waterways. They were there unloaded, fed, watered and rested for two days. Then, under direction of Colonel Jim Cornwall, they were loaded on barges and towed slowly by steamboats to their destination. In the years 1925-1928 about 6,000 were taken from Wainwright. Those left were old and unhealthy and, when the park was required in 1942 for military purposes, the remaining buffalo were disposed of. They are doing well in captivity and constitute a link between present-day conditions and the days when they were the lords of the plains.

Early Ranching

The first cattle to come to America came with the Spaniards about the time of the gold rush in 1521. There were six heifers and one young bull in the first shipment



but later others joined them and ranching developed in Mexico and Texas during the next three centuries. The cattle were longhorns. The following Spanish names still are used: chapps, quirt, sombrero, lasso and corral. The herds increased so rapidly that at one time there were six cattle for each Texan. There was a market in the northern States

for hides, hoofs and horns and the meat often had to be left for the vultures and coyotes.

The problem was to find markets for this excellent beef and many thrilling stories are told of overland trips to mining camps or other markets. A book, entitled "Trail Driving Days," by Dee Brown, tells of many adventures of the trail in those early ranching days. One rancher drove 1,100 longhorns across New Mexico and Arizona, dodging hostile bands of Indians all the way and made a profit of \$20,000 (a goodly fortune in those days) when he sold out to the meat-hungry miners.

In trailing cattle at that time, there were many dangers. There were always unfriendly, hungry Indians. There was the danger of Texas fever, stampedes, robbery, cold weather and thunderstorms. When swollen streams were met, rafts had to be constructed to float the supply wagons across and there was often loss of stock and human life while swimming in the rapid current. "The Chisholm Trail" gives a graphic description of the life of a cattleman in those days of moving stock from the rich pasture lands to markets.

Ranchers had all the hazards in those days that now exist and, at least, one other besides. Some of the herds were driven across the Mississippi to supply the Southern armies. They were paid for in Confederate money which was worthless.

However, it was not all hard luck. A Chicago man made a fortune selling pork to the Union army and establish-

ed a packing plant. His name was Armour. A short time later a New England Yankee named Swift read the future correctly and selected Chicago as a future meat centre.

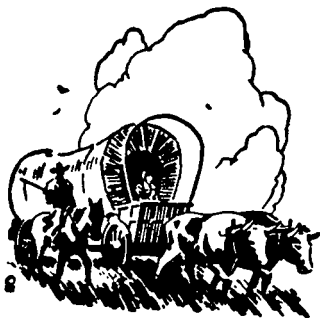
As time went on, the Indians became a little more modern. Instead of attacking and scalping those crossing Indian territory, they demanded a 10c toll per head of stock and usually got it.

The marketing was fairly well organized by 1868 when rumors of a disease of cattle, "Spanish fever," spread across the country. A panic seized the owners of herds and the buyers everywhere. At one time 50,000 cattle were in corals at one shipping point, named Abilene, with no markets, as consumers were really afraid to eat beef.

In 1870, prosperity returned. There were 300,000 cattle shipped through Abilene. The railway could hardly secure rolling stock to carry all the cattle. The Chisholm Trail was worn deep like a river 200 to 400 yards wide, with circular bedding grounds at regular intervals for passing herds. The town had 10 boarding houses, 10 saloons, five stores and four hotels. There was much rowdiness and many gun fights with no effective law enforcement. When signs were put up that firearms were not allowed in the town limits, they were shot full of holes. When a jail was built, a party of celebrating cowboys tore it down. It was the usual wild west history before lawlessness was suppressed.

The Beginning in Canada

The very first cattle to see Western Canada were a bull and two cows brought in by the North West Company and sold to a settler before 1821. Shortly after this, some U.S.A.



dealers drove 300 head of cattle into Manitoba and sold them to the settlers along the Red River. The cows brought about \$150.00 each and steers about \$90.00.

For a time the numbers increased, but soon, due to lack of care and inbreeding, they decreased in numbers and in size. In the first drove, the cattle weighed 1,000 pounds each. After 15 years, 700 pounds was the best weight.

A second drove of cattle came in in 1825. It was thought that as the buffalo could live without stables, so could the cattle. The result was that most of them perished during the winter.

Later, other cattle came in for use of the small settlements around the trading centres and to supply the police officers with milk and meat.

There were no cattle on the open range at that time and, indeed, it was found that previous to the passing of the buffalo, there was no use in having cattle on a ranch as the buffalo bulls would kill the range bulls and the cows would drift off with the herds of buffalo.

In 1874 a man named Shaw drove 500 beef cattle across the mountains and into the foothill country. There was plenty of grass and water but no market for the beef. There were no towns or railroads and over the prairie trails it was a thousand miles to Winnipeg and 260 miles to Fort Benton, the nearest U.S.A. shipping point.

The first large ranch in the Medicine Hat district was started in 1886. It was the property of the Medicine Hat Ranching Company and has ever since been referred to as the M.H.R. The original owners were Thos. Tweed, W. F. Finlay, J. Ewart and Ezra Pearson. Mr. Pearson was named as manager and he was well known in the district because he had been driving the stage coach between Medicine Hat and Lethbridge since 1883. He brought in the very best

horses and cattle that could be obtained. The first shipments came from Dayton, Ontario.

The history of the Cochrane Ranch has been recorded by Mr. L. V. Kelly and illustrates the many tragedies that can befall the ranching industry. In 1881, the company purchased six or seven thousand head of cattle in Montana under the arrangement that the herds were to be delivered at the boundary to the I. G. Baker Company. The stock cost \$16.00 per head and the Baker Company received \$2.50 per head for delivery. A speed record for driving cattle was made, but at great cost. The herd made from 15 to 18 miles per day and, to do this, they were shoved along at a merciless rate. The poor animals were whipped along from daylight until dark and were then so weary that they lay down without eating. The losses, especially among the calves, was very heavy and all the survivors were weak and exhausted when they finally reached the Cochrane Ranch. The Polled Angus stood the trip best, the Herefords were rated as second and the Shorthorns suffered most of all. Winter came early that year and hundreds died. In some places in the spring, the coulees were almost filled with dead cattle.

Other very large outfits, e.g., Bar U, Oxley's and Walrand, had heavy losses from fires burning up the grass, wolves killing the stock, Indians and even white men stealing and branding strays, mange and, most of all, from the severe winters.

The life of the cowboys of the time seemed to conform to one standard. They would work hard and dangerously for months, enduring many hardships. Then, being lonesome, they would go into a town, take a few drinks, sit in at a poker game and be stony broke in a few days. Some went through this program year after year. The traditions called for loyalty to the employers and especially when trailing cattle for long distances, life would be strenuous. They often had to swim their herds across swiftly flowing streams. It was often hard to get leading animals into the water but, once they were in, the others would follow. The current would carry them long distances down stream. The calves would struggle nobly to keep up, with only their heads in sight. When they climbed up the farther bank there was great excitement among the mothers and calves. A thousand mothers calling for their young ones and a thousand young ones bawling for their mothers had, to say the least, a disquieting effect.

When horses and cattle took the place of the buffalo

on the feeding ground, the wolves returned from the timber area to prey on the domestic animals. A full-grown wolf would do a thousand dollars worth of damage yearly. The young stock suffered most. Colts were easy victims as the mares would run and the youngsters, when separated from their mothers, were easily pulled down. Calves were not so easy as cattle would bunch up and present a formidable front of horns to the vicious enemy. Stock of all ages was to be found badly mutilated and usually hamstrung so they would have to be destroyed.

Lawlessness was common for a time. Cattle rustlers and horse thieves preferred to operate in Canada because, in Montana, a vigilance committee would hang them on the nearest tree. In Canada, they were assured of a fair trial and, at the most, imprisonment, if found guilty.

Settlement

While farmers were locating in northern Alberta, the south became the home of the rancher. After the N.W.M.P. came in 1874 herds were safer from Indian and white men



who would kill and carry off stray animals. The courts of the time recognized that a rancher could not keep his eye on his cattle all the time and the sentences handed out for rustling were severe.

The choice ranges were rapidly taken up, sometimes by originals of the N.W.M.P. and sometimes by men from the south attracted by the native grasses and the mild climate. The newcomer would choose a location for the ranch-house close to a little stream and build a log house where it would be sheltered by a coulee bank. He would soon have a cook-house and a bunk-house for the ranch hands near by. These early pioneers took great risks and were courageous, skilful and hard working. They might shoot up a bar-room occasionally but they were good neighbors, their word was their bond and no one was ever turned away hungry from their doors.

The department in 1881 began to give 21-year leases. Huge areas were rented for 1 cent per acre per year by the larger ranchers. Later a different formulae was worked out whereby the cost of leases depended on the carrying capacity of the grass and the gain in weight of the animals.

Disaster, however, was never far away. In 1910, Messrs. Wallace and Ross had cattle in the Cypress Hills area. As the market was good they arranged to ship a trainload of fat steers. The C.P.R. arranged to have cars ready at Manyberries station. The animals were gathered and were being moved toward the shipping point when without warning a blizzard came up. The cattle would not face the storm and in spite of the strenuous efforts of the riders they scattered widely and drifted in many directions. Cold weather came on and as there was little grass many of the animals became weak, got down in the snow and never rose again. When spring came, few of the steers were found alive, the Fordney-McCumber tariff was on and the fine herd was a total loss.

The Roundup

In the early ranching days the annual roundup was the big event of the year. It was necessary to trail the beef cattle many miles to a market, so each outfit tried to get started early while the grass along the route would be good. Much of the success of the "gather" rested on the shoulders of the range boss. He had to manage the three most unpredictable members of the animal kingdom—cattle, horses and men. In the average outfit there would be about 20 riders, each with a string of horses, a chuckwagon, which was home on the trail and most important of all, a good cook.



On the first day of the roundup, the riders would be up at dawn, eat breakfast hurriedly at the chuckwagon, catch their best ponies and gather around the range boss for instructions. The boss would direct the riders out in various localities to "sweep the range." When the rider reached the most distant point of the area allotted to him he turned back and herded all the cattle he could find back to the camp centre. All day long the riders would work the cattle, driving them out of the scrub, exploring valleys and coulees and racing in various directions to chase the animals in the right direction. It was hot, exhausting, dusty and often dangerous work. At the end of the day, while the cook was washing up the pots and pans, the riders would gather around the camp fire, sing a few songs and then all except the night herders would roll up in their bed rolls.

Of course things might go wrong. A rider might be lost. Rain and cold weather might make the life almost unendurable. Thunder and lightning might stampede the herds and there was always the danger of accidents and sickness.

The second operation of the roundup is the cutting out of the mature animals that would be taken to market. For this work, much skill and patience is required by both horse and rider. After selecting the animal to be separated out from the milling, bawling herd of longhorns, the horse and rider would begin a game of twisting and turning, moving quickly and slowly and finally working the animal to the required place.

The Ranching Industry

Oh give me a home where the buffalo roam
And the deer and the antelope play,
Where never is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Ranching is written up as the industry of luxury and romance. In reality, there is much hard work, physical danger and financial risk involved.



Southern Alberta is well suited by nature for a livestock industry. From remote ages it supported vast herds of buffalo. The native grasses are nutritious and there are streams and sloughs. Owing to the "Chinook" winds, the cold spells of winter do not last long.

Before 1875, ranching was impossible in this district because the Indians were not under any effective control and would not hesitate to slaughter the animals for food.

In 1877, Fred Kanouse turned some 22 head loose on the open prairie and was thus the father of Alberta ranching.

In 1880, some system was introduced by the government. A rancher was allowed to rent up to 100,000 acres at \$10.00 per thousand acres an annual rental. "Squatters' rights" were soon respected and thus started the ageold battle between the open-range ranchers and the homesteaders.

As more and more cattle drifted in from the south, mange was introduced and spread widely in the herds. In 1898, the whole area south of the main line of the C.P.R. was quaranteed and about 375,00 cattle were dipped before the disease disappeared.

The cattle from Mexico and Texas did not do well. They were not only savage but ill formed and so thin that the best pasture did not fit them for export. They excelled only in length of horn and length of wind and the owners were glad to get rid of them. Shorthorn, Polled Angus and Herefords were introduced and finally the white-faced Herefords became the most profitable breed. With the open range and

the mixing of cattle, there was rapid deterioration of the standard.

Terrific losses were taken at times on account of storms, disease and market conditions.

Ranching has always been an extremely risky business but perhaps the most tragic losses were made by the early British investors in the cattle business.

The records show that the winter of 1883 was a long and bitterly cold winter. The losses sustained by those who had cattle on the open range were very severe. In the spring-time in many coulees there were heaps of dead bodis and Indians made wages by skinning the animals for 25 cents each.

In 1885, the Cochrane cattle were moved to the Waterton Lake district. The snow kept falling that year until it was six feet deep in places. There were no "Chinooks" and even the best rustlers among the cattle could not get feed. The cattle finally crowded to the edge of the lakes, browsing the willows to stubs and bawling constantly in their hunger. A loss of the entire herd was threatened.

Frank Strong offered to save the cattle for \$1,000. His offer was accepted and he rounded up about 300 cayuses. He hired a few experienced riders and, without delay, driving the tough ponies before, they struck out through the deep snow. Urged on by whip and spur, the hardy little animals foundered for two days, cutting a wide swath in the crusted snow. They then reached the lakes and the imprisoned, starving herds. Strong at once turned his band homeward and they went back at a gallop, reaching the starting point in eight hours. Right behind them came the great herd of bawling steers. They came at a fast trot as they seemed to know that open prairie and food was ahead. In twelve hours thousands of Cochrane cattle were feeding on the cured grass of the reserve.

As the years went by, the C.P.R. and the government having much land, began to encourage farmers to settle in Southern Alberta. In 1885, all even-numbered sections of the grazing land were thrown open for homesteads, pre-emptions or for sale. In 1892, notice was given that all leases not providing for homesteading would be cancelled in 1896. This was the "death blow" to the large ranchers. Squatters made a practice of filing near the springs and water holes in order to be bought off by the cattleman who had to have the water. Everywhere the mileage of wire fences grew and

the old cattle trails that had been used since the foundation of the industry, were closed.

It is true that George Lane and his associates leased large areas and tried to extend their operations, but the majority of ranchers either went out of business or decreased their herds.

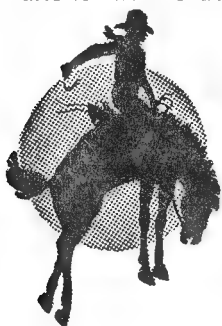
In 1904, the Cochrane Ranch Company, the biggest firm in the country, decided to go out of business and 500,000 acres of the best land in the south was bought up by the Mormon Church.

The cowboy with his wide-brimmed hat, his chapps and his bucking bronco, was not the romantic or picturesque figure often described. He was fond of expressing himself by stanzas of poetry like:

Just let me live my life as I've begun
And give me work that's open to the sky,
Make me a partner of the wind and sun
And I won't ask for life that's soft or high.

Ranchers

Very little has been written about the late A. J. Day and yet he was a most colorful figure and an outstanding rancher in the days of the open range. He and his relatives brought to the country some 22,000 head of cattle and 700 horses. This stock had been shipped from the far south to Billings, Montana, and trailed from there to the 65,000-acre lease Mr. Day had secured south of Medicine Hat. He paid the Dominion government \$40,000 in duty when he brought his herd across.



Tony Day was for years a prominent Texas cowman. As the range there became crowded, he "followed the grass" through the new Western States and finally took the long trail up to Alberta. He was one of the pioneers who braved the frontier to establish the cattle industry. There were prairie fires and drought. There were wild animals and hard winters. The stock losses were often heavy and the markets poor, but the story of the range stockmen forms an engrossing chapter in the history of the province.

"Uncle Tony," as Mr. Day was affectionately called, had lived through the days of slavery and one of his ex-slaves came with him to Medicine Hat.

Like other Texans, he was a good cattleman. He always had a smile and had a fund of entertaining stories to tell. He had many friends and was always a welcome companion on account of his wisdom, his dry humor and his pleasant Texas drawl. When the large leases were thrown open for settlers, he, like others, was forced out of the business. He did not like retirement and when asked if he would resume ranching if he could get a suitable range, he said, "I'd fly at it."

Ranchers in those days handled large sums of money and their word was their bond.

On one occasion, Mr. Fares, of Gordon, Ironsides & Fares, gave a man a substantial cheque for some cattle. The next year when Mr. Fares was starting west, the bookkeeper told him that this cheque had never been cashed. Mr. Fares found the rancher and asked about it. "It is all right," the rancher said. "You paid me for the cattle and I lost the

money. I will take the loss as it is my fault." Mr. Fares had difficulty in explaining the case and getting him to take another cheque.

Another Alberta rancher sold several hundred steers and went to Winnipeg with them. He was dressed in high boots and working clothes. Upon making delivery, he was given a cheque for ninety thousand dollars. The hotel manager accompanied him to the station. They started to go through the gate used by the Pullman passengers when the rancher was stopped by the policeman in uniform and told that the "Homesteaders' Excursion" train did not leave until the next day. The rancher protested and was asked to show his ticket. He reached to his inside pocket and brought out a long, narrow piece of paper. The policeman took it and stared with hard and suspicious eyes at the toil-marked man. "Where did you get this?" he asked. Not receiving a quick answer, he said: "You come with me." The hotel manager made an explanation and the guard handed the ninety thousand dollar cheque back to the cattleman who had drawn out this strip of paper in mistake for his ticket.

Branding

Branding is said to be the "heraldry of the range." It was started in the very early days of Spanish-Mexican cattle ranching. The first brands in Texas were the initials of the



owner, and if two owners had the same initials, a bar or a circle distinguished one from the other.

Colonel Maverick became the owner of 400 cattle in Mexico in 1847. He had no time to look after the cattle

and they multiplied rapidly and became as wild as antelopes. When ranchers saw an unbranded animal, they would say, "That's one of Maverick's," or "That's a Maverick." As no effort was made to retrieve the strays, cattlemen picked them up and put their own brands on them. This went on for six years and then the Colonel, realizing what was going on sent a party of cowboys to the area and they managed to round up about the same number as Mr. Maverick had owned at first.

He had had enough of absentee ranching and he sold out his herd. Many of the cattle were so wild that the buyer never caught them. For years some of these "Mavericks" wandered about the plains of southern Texas and so a new word was added to the American language. To this day an unbranded range animal is known as a "maverick." Friction over unbranded cattle caused many a gun fight.

When registration of brands was established by law, ranchers vied with each other in designing unusual brands. There was the hash knife, the bible, the stirrup, the scissors, the long rail and a successful poker player designed the four sixes which was a difficult brand to alter.

While branding is associated with heraldry and romance, it has always been the toughest and roughest job of the cowboys. Getting a hot iron on a stubborn cow or calf, either in the open or in a corral was never easy or pleasant work. When dragged to the branding fire even the mildest animal would begin bawling and kicking. The clouds of dust and the acrid smell of burning hair and hide would almost suffocate the struggling cowboys.

A scheme was worked out by which "flankers" tackled the animal from opposite sides. One doubled up the animal's front legs and put his knee on its head. The other braced one foot against one hind leg and pressed it forward. The other leg of the beef was stretched backward at full length and held there. The brander then pressed the iron home and the checker entered another mark in the roundup tally book.

A Colorful Rancher

In 1885, a pale, slender, shy, young man in his twenties went from his New York home for a short hunting trip to the bad lands of Dakota. He stayed for four years. During that



time he operated two ranches, wrote several books and developed a self-reliance and a direct action that carried him to the White House. His name was Theodore Roosevelt. He preferred the quiet life of the ranch rather than the high times in the

saloons and he soon discovered that his cowboy friends could discuss politics and books as picturesquely and as entertainingly as his friends in the east could. He leased some grazing land along the Northern Pacific Railway. Starting with 300 cattle, he had gathered 1,000 head by 1884. He quickly learned to saddle and ride the bucking horses but did not use the language of the average rider. At first he was thought to be a dude and another tenderfoot. As he wore thick lgasses, he was called four eyes.

On one bitter cold day Roosevelt was trailing some stray horses. It was very cold and as night came on he decided to stay at a station that boasted one saloon only. As he approached the entrance, two shots exploded inside. A bearded man partly drunk was marching up and down in front of the bar clarrying two cocked pistols. "Four Eyes," shouted the drunk. "Four Eyes is going to set up the drinks." Roosevelt ignored him and went to the stove to get warm. The man waved the guns recklessly and became more and more profane. He kept pointing the guns in all directions and calling for Four Eyes to treat. He persisted and even started to maul the stranger. Roosevelt was unarmed but when the chance came he dropped him with a blow that would have pleased John L. Sullivan. After this he was "Mister" Roosevelt and some of the papers started to boost him for Congress. He was more interested in ranching than in politics. He would join the roundup at 3 a.m., ride 50 miles a day, and share whatever food was going. He wore a wide-brimmed hat, chapps, a bandanna and alligator hide boots. He invented his own lullaby to sing to the cattle when he was night-herding. The other riders at the end of a roundup said, "'This four-eyed maverick has got sand in his crow a-plenty."

Bands of outlaws were rustling cattle and horses on a big scale. At a meeting of ranchers, it was suggested that a small army of cowboys should round them up in open warfare. Roosevelt was all for this but older ranchers pointed out that many would be killed as the outlaws were dead shots and well armed.

A vigilance committee was formed. When a stock thief became known he was tracked down, captured and quietly hanged. A placard labeled "horse thief" or "cattle thief" was always left fastened to his clothes. A newspaper published at the time had this line in one issue: "Montana is rapidly reducing the number of horse thieves." No one knows how many were hanged but estimates run as high as seventy-five. Hundreds of others moved away, so in a very short time Dakota and Montana were swept clean of cattle rustlers.

The Matador

It was beautiful Sunday in May. Many thousand people had gathered in the bull-fighting centre in Southern Spain to see the last performance of Pocate. This man was the greatest matador of his generation and after eight years of strenuous contests he had announced that this would be his last fight. He had made four million dollars in his amazing career. He came in from his great ranch on Saturday and crowds waited along the streets to get a glimpse of him. One old lady dressed in rags saw him in his car. Rapping at the window, she said fervently, "God protect you, boy, God protect you."

He was 29 years old, but looked much older. He had a scare on his face, but a stranger meeting him might think he was a No. 1 banker, dancer, artist or hod carrier, but he would know he was the best in his field.

No one else in Spain had such a car. It had power, external splendor and was so built that the owner could sleep in the back. He fought every second day for the six-month season and needed to rest between cities.

Experienced as he was as a soldier of fortune, he could not shake off the feeling that tragedy would come in tomorrow's fight. He went with his manager to look over the cattle. From above he could see the powerful bulls milling around in the pen. Each was black with sharp horns and not too big. He knew they would look much larger when he was on their level in the ring. In another pen a substitute bull stood alone, pawing the dust. He was gigantic, black and white in color with twisted horns and a mean look.

Pocate could not shake off the depression. His manager advised him to coast along in this final battle and to take no chances. He met an old cattleman who said, "The danger in the last fight is not in the cattle, my boy. It is in oneself. The crowd is heartless and one is tempted to give them a bonus or a reminder of one's greatness."

The moment came when Pocate was in the ring and thousands of excited people were cheering. As the bull charged he fell and the bull's shoulder smashed against his chest. He was hurled back on the sand, bloody and unconscious. He was carried to a dressing station but as soon as he was conscious he insisted on going back into the arena. There his picadors had dismounted but as soon as he was recognized there was applause. "Go back to the infirmary,"

called his manager, but when he saw a savage bull charging a young matador he dashed to the rescue, caught the bull's head with his bare hands and saved the young man's life.

His next bull was the black and white substitute. Time after time the animal charged and each time the skilful matador held the cloth so that the horns came closer and closer to his body. He did in all eight "passes of death" out there alone in the ring. The crowd cheered and gasped. All knew that never before had there been such an exhibition of skill. The slightest miscalculation would have resulted in tragedy. Five more times Pocate repeated the pass. The crowd was wild with emotion and the newsreel cameramen recorded it all. His white and golden uniform was discolored with blood from the wound animal brushing against him.

"Kill it," shouted the manager.

"More, more," the crowd was calling. Finally the blade went into the animal and reached the aorta. The great head jerked up suddenly, the crooked horn stabbed and Pocate was lifted high on the bull's head. The sharp horn tore through the abdominal muscles right up to the stomach. He fell mortally wounded. The bull wobbled, coughed and fell over dead.

The Short Grass Area

Before 1912, the beef cattle industry in Southern Alberta was in a thriving condition. Those were the days of the wide open range. There were no fences or cultivated fields and, when one area was grazed, the herds were moved so that no area was depleted of grass.



In the following years, the area was made available for homesteading. There was a great rush to file on the land. Long lines of applicants would stand in front of the land office all day and, indeed, all night, waiting a turn to file. That was the end of the open range and grazing was restricted to the rougher areas after the homesteaders were located.

In the years that followed, particularly the years from 1916 to 1925, many of the dry land farmers found the land they had chosen was not suitable for crop production. Great losses were sustained and there was much real hardship as the crops failed year after year and many had to ask for government relief. Some four million acres were abandoned and the areas that had been cultivated were unfit for grazing as the native grass had been ploughed down and the fields were now in weeds. Deserted homes, unused school buildings, roads, etc., were mute testimony of this unwise policy.

In order to make a study of the whole problem, the Manyberries ranching station was set up. Experiments were made to discover the carrying capacity of land, the effect of irrigation, the breed of animals best suited to the area and, in fact, every branch of ranching practice. Observation showed that in 1931 the rainfall was 6.72 inches and that in 1927 it was 25.28 inches. Until the last three years, the average since 1886 was 11.3 inches.

Evaporation from an open tank from May until September was 32 inches. Much of the precipitation is lost by the rapid run-off with a heavy rainfall or a rapid thaw. Light showers of an inch or less are of little value. A study of the rainfall does not help us to forecast the future, but it does show that there have been great variations in the past.

The low-growing perennial grasses are nutritive and, although their growth varies with the moisture, they have

continued to live and occupy the area. The cold spells of winter do not usually last long and the Chinook winds uncover enough grass to enable stock to graze most of the average winter.

Scientific ranching and farming methods have made this short grass area productive, but the heart-breaking experiences and heroic struggles of the early settlers should not be forgotten.

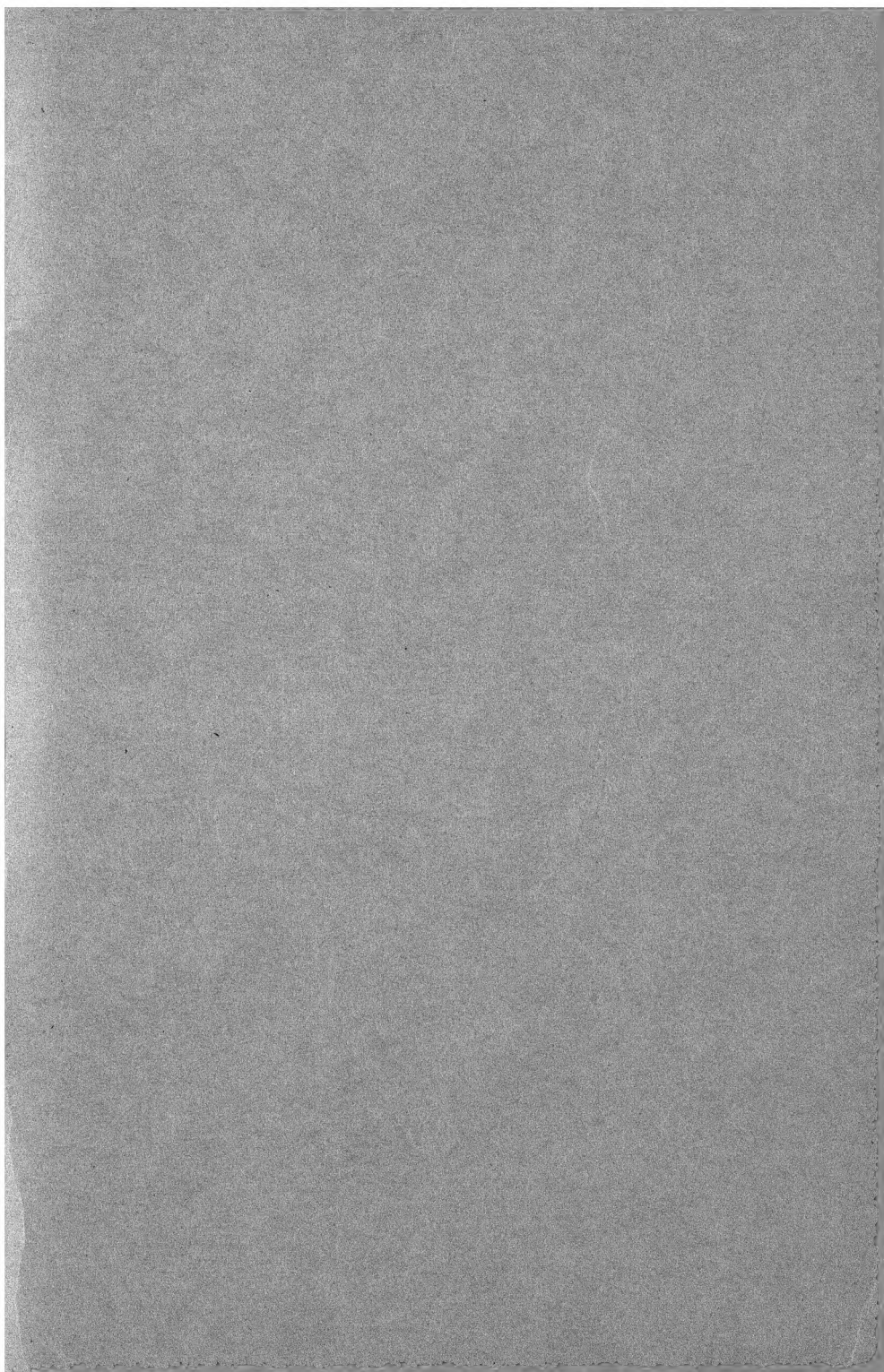
The Big Blizzard

In Montana in the winter of 1886-87 a dreadful tragedy overtook the ranchers. That fall the wild fowl and song birds started south early. The white Arctic owls appeared and the Indians took this as a warning of storms. The muskrats and the beavers built their winter quarters thicker than usual and worked night and day to complete them early. Six inches of snow fell on November 16th. The native cattle continued to rustle but the Texas steers wandered aimlessly in circles. On January 15th it was 46 below and millions of open range cattle were scattered and starving. As snowing continued, riders found great heaps of dead cattle along barbed wire fences. Cattle were frozen stiff standing in the deep snow, and some ranch houses were completely drifted over. Wolves and coyotes came in bands to feast on the dead and dying.

There was an appalling loss of human life. Riders were lost, and when exhausted slumber overtook them and they died. Whole families perished in their walled cabins. Those in dugouts fared better.

The roundup in the spring was a dismal affair. There was no happiness in gathering the few gaunt survivors of what had been the greatest herds of the continent.

Although not on such a large scale, a similar disaster overtook southern Alberta ranchers in the late spring of 1907. The winter had been severe, the grazing was poor so that stock was not in good shape when the blizzard came. The snow was so deep that cattle could not get around and they were soon starving. Day after day the storm continued and cattle became so exhausted that they could no longer drift with the wind. They could only stand in bunches in the coulee or in the fence corners and, bowling continually, become exhausted and sink in the snow. The losses were terrific. When the Chinook came there were great heaps of dead cattle in many places. The losses were very, very great, and in many homes, hopes had to be abandoned. It can be said, however, that the most sorrow came from the fact that no help could be given to the animals, for which the ranch families had a real affection, when they were suffering and dying.



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